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ABSTRACT

A study explored the perceptions of 155 early field experience (EFE) elementary education majors who were in one of six sections of a reading methods course at a midwestern university. Responses to an open-ended final examination question at the end of three consecutive semesters asked students to describe and evaluate the classroom reading instruction in one of their 2-week field experiences. Three hypotheses grounded in the data were developed using the constant comparative technique: (1) the majority of pre-service students sent into elementary school classrooms for an EFE perceive the reading instruction and organization they observe to be contradictory to what they are taught in their reading methods class at the university; (2) students see the reality of the elementary school classroom as basal readers; and (3) students experience large group reading instruction as common a practice as the traditional small group instruction of three or more groups. The irony and the dilemma are that what teachers teach students and anticipate they experience and use often never actually happens in real life. (One table of data is included and 47 references are attached.) (MG)

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SITUATIONAL IRONY:

EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCES AND THE TEACHING OF READING

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Runninghead: Situational Irony

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Abstract

Situational irony is a literary term used to imply a discrepancy between what is expected and what happens. As this study suggests this term can be aptly applied to preservice reading methods courses and field experiences at the university level. The author reports the perceptions of 155 elementary education majors concerning reading practices they observed in a two-week early field experience that was required during a semester of methods courses before student teaching. These perceptions collected over three semesters from 155 different classrooms support the findings of researchers who have documented that many inservice teachers do not follow reading practices recommended by scholars and supported by current research in the field. Three hypotheses grounded in the data were developed using the constant comparative technique: (1) Preservice teachers often perceive the reading instruction and organization they observe in school classrooms to be contradictory to what they are taught in their reading methods courses at the university: (2) Students see the reality of the elementary classroom instruction as basal readers, and (3) Students experience en masse reading instruction that is oblivious to individual needs and levels. The irony and the dilemma are that what we teach students and anticipate they use often never actually happens in real life. In this papaer, these issues and possible solutions at the course and university level are discussed

In Becoming a Nation of Readers, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985) suggest there is a core of verified reading instructional practices that will produce citizens that read with a high level of skill and satisfaction (p. 117). They recommend that good teaching involves (a) devoting more time to comprehension instruction; (b) less emphasis on basal readers and completion of worksheets and dittos; (c) more independent reading; (d) increased opportunities to write; and (e) use of a wider range of higher-quality reading material. However, there is growing evidence that many inservice teachers do not follow these and other reading practices recommended by scholars and supported by current research in the field. Researchers have observed basal-driven and routinized teaching (Blanton & Moorman, 1985b; Duffy & McIntyre, 1982; Durkin, 1978-79; Woodward, 1986); overuse of commercial materials (Anderson, 1984; Mason, 1983; Shannon, 1983, 1987); little opportunity for children to read independently (Anderson, et al, 1985); differentiated instruction of high and low readers (Allington, 1983, 1984; Hiebert, 1983; Mason, 1984); lack of strategic and explicit comprehension instruction (Durkin, 1978-79; Blanton & Moorman, 1985b; Wendler, Samuels, & Moore, 1989); little discussion of stories (Mason, 1983); and a dearth of real writing opportunities (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985).

Some educators rightly question the value and use of preservice field experience if practices of cooperating teachers are not congruent with those recommended. Many educators (Blanton & Moorman. 1985a; Evans, 1986; Katz & Cain, 1987; and Zeichner, 1980) argue that universities are doing undergraduates methods students an injustice by encouraging

inferior instruction and perpetuating the status quo. In fact, Blanton and Moorman (1985a) suggest that field experiences for prospective classroom teachers of reading "might be described as aiding and abetting the poor classroom reading instruction clearly documented in the observational literature" (p. 56). Katz and Cain (1987) discuss the complaint of insufficient opportunities for students to observe or to practice "good" practice. They suggest that question of length or amount of practice are irrelevant if the community lacks settings in which trainees can observe "good" practices. They argue that students "do learn from imperfect or "bad" practices in field placements. However, just what is learned is not clear" (p.776). Zeichner (1980) suggests that what field experience students learn is often "miseducative rather than helpful" (p.51). Agreeing with Zeichner, Evans (1986) argues that classroom teachers exercise an influence particularly on early field experience (EFE) students because the teachers represent what "experienced teachers do" and "may be the first teachers students observe from the other side of the desk. Consequently, the existence of poor teaching models poses a very serious problem" (p.45)[1].

Related Reading Research

Although often referred to in the literature, "the apparent gulf between educators of teachers and practitioners in field settings has ... not been studied empirically" (Katz & Cain, 1987). However, several descriptive studies have been reported that are related to that concern (Blair, 1978; McMillan, 1987; Becher & Ade, 1982; Hodges, 1982; and Daves, Morton & Grace, 1990). At the heart of the issue is the degree of influence exerted by the cooperating teacher and the perceived environment of the school.

Reviewing the research, Ervay (1985) concludes that the influence of the cooperative teacher far outweighs any educational program at the college level and when goals of campus and field collide, teacher education efforts before student teaching are "effectively eliminated" (p.37).

In a study specifically addressing the influence of reading methods courses, Blair (1978) reached the same conclusion. In a case study of four student teachers she found that the teaching practices of the cooperation teacher were often different from those advocated in the reading methods course and that actual classroom experiences had a greater effect on reading practices than reading method courses. "Conditions in the practicum classroom were so overwhelming that students quickly changed many of their belief, values, and teaching practices related to reading instruction" (p. 7288a).

In a more recent case study, McMillan (1987) found that only one of four elementary students in a reading/language arts EFE was able to consistently implement content taught in the reading methods course taken concurrently. This content included appropriate planning, explicit stating of purpose of instruction, comprehension strategy development, and materials selection. McMillan concluded that "although the content of the reading methods course influenced preservice teachers' planning and implementation of reading instruction, the extent of influence was mediated by several identifiable variables" (pp. 126-127). These variables involved influence of the cooperation teacher, the curricular demands of the school, the students' own histories, communication between college instructors and cooperating teachers, and emphasis placed on classroom management issues. The attitudes, behaviors, and

practices of the cooperating teacher and the school environment seemed critical in bridging the gap between course content and field classroom.

In contrast, two studies (Becher & Ade, 1982; Hodges, 1982) show that the presence of the good practices of a cooperating teacher during field experiences may not be as important as many would argue. Becher and Ade (1982) found the presence of "good practice" had a low relationship to a student's performance at the end of (a) 100 hours of EFE, (b) junior student teaching--half-day, eight weeks, and (c) senior student teaching--full-day, eight weeks. In other words, the mere presence of a good model was not related to students' performance. The authors propose several possible reasons for this: (a) observation is not as useful as deliberate modeling and demonstration followed by guided practice, (b) students did not perceive the field experiences as situation in which they were to learn good pedagogy, but ones in which they were to develop and practice the pedagogy which had been taught to them on campus, or (c) supervisors may have communicated to the students that the field experiences were opportunities for students to develop and practice good pedagogy, not to imitate their cooperating teachers (pp. 28-29).

Hodges (1982) suggests that teacher educators have been too quick to blame the cooperating teachers for many of the poor teaching practices seen in student teaching situations. She studied five student teachers in charge of 15 third and fourth graders for a semester without a cooperating teacher. Her findings showed that "even preservice teachers who do not have a cooperating teacher often act in ways that are dissonant with views they espoused immediately after taking a reading methods course. And, in some cases, they even change their views toward reading instruction. Much of the reading group was spent in round robin

reading; independent reading was only done if something did not run over into its allotted 20 minutes; attempts to organize literature groups, integrate social studies, and individualize reading floundered; and reading group membership never changed during the semester.

Like Hodges, Daves, Morton, & Grace (l990) found evidence that what is taught on campus is not practiced in the field. Daves, et al. report that even when there is a strong emphasis on recommended practices (i.e. language experience, writing, children's literature, and free silent reading) in university reading courses, first year teachers are not using these practices. Their reading instruction time is spent using basal readers and workbooks. These practices were not cultivated in their undergraduate reading courses (p. 27). The novice teachers perceive that for administrators, teachers, and parents in their schools, the basal approach is more important to implement than those practices advocated by the university.

Student Perceptions

While we have some data on novice teachers' perceptions, few studies have been reported on students' perceptions of early field experiences. and match or mismatch of university training. Goodman (1985) and Lasley & Applegate (1984) report that there is an absence in the literature as to students perceptions of the realities that confront them in the classroom.

In a study of characteristic problems encountered by 272 pre-student teachers in early field experiences (EFEs), Lasley & Applegate (1985) found that students "could see little relationship between methods course content (what a faculty member told them should be done) and classroom experiences. Indeed, many field experience students found that

they disagreed with the management tactics and instructional strategies of their cooperating teachers" (p. 225).

In line with the concern that reading field experiences may be inconsistent with what students are taught on campus and in view of the lack of data on EFEs in reading, the purpose of the study was to gather and analyze preservice students' perceptions of reading instruction practices during a 2-week field experience before student teaching.

The Study

The present study reports the perceptions of 155 EFE elementary education majors who were in one of six sections of a reading methods course taught by the author at a midwestern university. Two sections took the course in spring of 1987, and two in fall of 1987, and two in spring of 1988. In addition to being overwhelmmingly female in number (males = 4; females =173), students were juniors or seniors who had not yet completed a semester of student teaching. While there was some variation in age, ethnic background, and economic level, most students were between the ages of 20 to 25, Caucasian, and middle class. In the 16-week methods block semester, each student spent 12 weeks taking five elementary methods courses and four weeks participating in early field experiences in the public schools (20 full days). The four weeks were divided into two separate EFEs usually at different grade levels and at different schools. For many of the students, these two EFEs were their first extended experience in an elementary classroom as a teaching participant. The goal of the EFE program as stated to the cooperation teachers by the university Department of Teacher Education was to give the students and opportunity to work with children in classrooms prior to student teaching. Since most of the students' observation requirements

were met in previous courses, they were ready to be active participants by teaching lessons to small or large groups, tutoring, or monitoring tests.

The students were placed in urban, suburban, rural, and small town schools within a 60-mile radius of the college campus. The cooperating teacher assignments were made on a voluntary basis and usually by the school principal [2] The university requires no supervision course for a teacher to participate. College level supervision was restricted to brief weekly visits to each student by a methods instructor with no observation of the student's teaching. However, the program was a "structured school experience" in that students had four to eight assignments to be completed for each of the five methods courses. Specifically for reading methods, the students were required to administer two individual informal inventories and teach five small-group lessons over the two field experiences (one language experience lesson, one word recognition lesson, one vocabulary development strategy such as semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis, or word mapping, and two comprehension strategy lessons using either story mapping, directed reading-thinking activity, experience-text-relationship, or a visual structure.).

The data reported here are responses to an open-ended final examination question at the end of three consecutive semesters asking each student to describe and evaluate the classroom reading instruction in one of their two-week field experiences. For each semester, the last course requirement before the final was to read Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, et al., 1985), and discuss "the verified practices of the best teacher in the best schools. . throughout the country" (p.120).

Method of Analysis

In total 177 responses to the final examination question were analyzed using the grounded theory approach of qualitative analysis first advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Parker & Gehrke (1986). This method is an "inductive system for generating interrelated hypotheses grounded, or based, in data. In general, before hypotheses are defined, data are collected, coded, analyzed, and arranged into theoretical categories and their properties. Then the categories and properties are analyzed to develop working hypotheses " (Parker & Gehrke, 1986, p. 228). Using constant comparative analysis, the study had five phases: (a) comparison of incidents and generation of categories--induced from the data, not created prior to its inspection; (b) comparison of incidents within emerging categories to better define attributes and properties of the categories; (c) integration of categories and properties; (d) refinement of emerging theory; and (e) construction of hypotheses grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1976; Parker & Gehrke, 1986). Coding and analysis was done by two graduate students who were inservice elementary teachers and also by the author.

Generation of Categories. As Glaser and Strauss (l967) suggest, perceived similarities and differences evolved quickly in the first inspection of the data. Four general categories of responses identified were: (a) students with positive reactions to the reading instruction they saw; (b) students with negative reactions; (c) student with both positive and negative reactions; and (d) students who just described the reading instruction, and did not evaluate what they saw.

In the second inspection of the three semesters of data, each coder independently classified each response into one of the four categories.

When the two graduate students coders disagreed, agreement was reached by the vote of a third independent coder, the author. Twenty-two responses fell into this last category. The fourth category and responses were dropped from further analysis because the students were asked both to describe and evaluate classroom reading instruction. A total of 155 student responses remained for the second phase of the study.

Properties of the Categories. In the second round of analysis, the coders looked for specific reasons why each response was judged in one of the three categories--in other words, factors to further define the three categories. For the first category (positive reactions), 32 different reasons were identified. In the second category (negative responses), 36 different reasons were identified and in the third (mixed reactions), 31.

Integration of Data. In the third phase of analysis, the properties were collapsed and integrated in order to make some sense of their meaning. Relationships between the three categories were also explored. For example, the use of a basal reading approach was a factor mentioned in both positive and negative responses. However, positive response students cited a flexible usage of basals along with other approaches, while negative response students listed routinized and inflexible usage of the basal reading series.

Refinement. As the third phase evolved, several propositions emerged. Properties of little relevance in each category were set aside so that more relevant ones could be brought in clearer focus (see Parker & Gehrke, 1986, p. 232). Integration of the salient properties of each category began to tell a story of the reading instruction the students saw and experienced in the school classrooms.

Hypotheses. Glaser & Strauss (1967) claim that the resulting theories or hypotheses are envisioned "as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfect product." (p. 32). Three hypotheses emerged from the analysis of the perceptions and observations of the pre-service students. These hypotheses are presented here, not as perfect hypotheses, but as invitations for further study of the gap between reading methods course content and the realities of the reading instruction in elementary school classrooms.

Results

Categories Identified. As shown in Table 1, 28 out of 155 students (18.1 percent) rated their reading field experience as positive--instruction that they would emulate or perceived as exemplary. One student wrote, "My second field experience was ideal. My teacher ran not only her reading groups but her entire class the way I dream of teaching some day!" Other positive responses by students were as follows:

"I agreed with my teacher's practice of discussion and the use of open-ended questions. She allowed the students to share their own stories and experiences as related to what was read."

"My cooperating teacher organized her classroom for reading much like the way I hope to organize my own. She used a very wholistic approach. The students read tradebooks three days a week. These were individual student's choice. The other two days they spent working on a selected story in the basal--this is discussed as a class. They were required to write a reaction to what was read in their individual

literature logs... Workbocks were seldom used except to reinforce skills to enhance comprehension."

"In my first field in first grade, Mrs. C. used various methods. She used basal readers, but only twice a week. This was more to satisfy the parents. But the other days she had interest groups. For these groups she had them go to the library and check out books about their interests. In group the children said their ideas on their interests and she wrote them down on a large sheet of paper. This is what the children actually read. Also, the children wrote their own books and published them--some big books."

Syntheses of data showed flexible use of basals, use of centers, tradebooks, individualized reading, small ability grouping, other forms of grouping, and encouragement of writing and independent reading as major reasons for identifying classroom reading program and exemplary.

The majority of students (54.2 percent) expressed negative reactions to their two-week reading experience--instruction they would not emulate. Students reported the following:

> "I will teach reading very differently from what I saw in the field and from how I was taught. ...I saw total reliance on the basal...with not much outside reading or varied instructional practices."

> "Of the two weeks (in my field experience), the students read ONE day. The rest of the time was spent on workbook pages, dittos and instruction of skills."

"Some of the points I noticed in the field and would not do in my own classroom were (1) round-robin reading, (2) extensive use of workbook pages and dittos. . ., and (3) the same routine everyday--read, discuss for a minute, and do workbook pages."

"The entire class (28-30) would read a story and then they were given worksheets or dittos to complete on the story. There was no pre-discussion ever, and hardly a discussion after the reading of the story."

"Her class rarely read a tradebook, not even during free time. .She had them (the library books) kept in the locker!"

"My teacher taught the low kids (in the whole grade). She expected little from them, so it should not have surprised her when they only worked to achieve the bare minimum requirements."

"The teacher I had organized her reading instruction by large group teaching! Can you believe it? Twenty-four students in one group and three others who worked on their own! I think that second graders need much more individual attention and should be on the level appropriate for them, not what's good for the majority."

Syntheses of data showed the three major complaints of the 84 students to be (a) the overuse of workbooks and worksheets (b) reliance on basals for reading instruction, and (c) predominance of large group and whole class reading instruction.

Connected to the use of basals were negative reactions concerning (a) the strict following of manuals by teachers (b) the amount and frequency of round robin oral reading, (c) the boredom of many of the students with the monotonous basal routines of instruction, (d) heavy use of large group instruction with the basal, and (e) prevalence of homogeneous grouping across a grade level.

Over 27% of the students had both negative and positive reaction to their reading EFE. The students affirmed many of the reading practices they saw, but disapproved of others. For example, one student wrote, "I agreed with the fact that she (the teacher) had small reading groups and that she had a special reading table to meet with them in the front of the room. However, I feel she could have done a lot more with the kids in the reading groups by working more with vocabulary development, using (comprehension) strategies like directed reading-thinking and story mapping. She should have had more discussion and asked higher level questions."

While properties of this third category were difficult to integrate and synthesize, the major complaints were the same as those in the negative category: overuse of workbooks and worksheets, basal, and large group instruction. Use of tradebooks, small group instruction, story extension, and story discussion were reported as positive elements of the reading program.

Hypotheses Generated from Data

Three hypotheses grounded in the data were developed:

#1 Hypothesis. The majority of pre-service students sent into elementary school classrooms for an early field experience perceive the

reading instruction and organization they observe to be contradictory to what they are taught in their reading method class at the university.

#2 Hypothesis. Students see the reality of the elementary school classroom as basal readers. Very few teachers use other types of instruction such as integration tradebooks, language experience, or other whole language approaches.

#3 Hypothesis. Students experience large group (en masse) reading instruction as common a practice as the traditional small group instruction of three or more groups. This practice seems oblivious to individual needs and levels. Even when teachers group homogeneously across grade level (a common practice in the area), students saw most teachers instructing the whole class as one reading group and ignoring individual differences.

Summary and Discussion

Using the constant comparative technique, 177 elementary students' responses to a final examination question were categorized to evaluate their perceptions of the classroom reading program in one 2-week EFE. Three categories (155 student responses) were identified as relevant to this study and properties of these categories were further analyzed. Three hypotheses based on the data were generated. reflecting the gulf between educators of teachers and practioners: (a) discrepancy between what is taught and what is experienced, (b) basal readers as the reality of reading instruction, and (c) en masse reading instruction oblivious to individual needs and levels.

Patterns of classroom instruction reported by the majority of students to support these three grounded hypotheses were as follows:

1. Little variation in reading approach with overuse of the basal series, over reliance on worksheets and workbooks, and teachers tied to basal manuals;
2. Heavy use of the basal teaching sequence (i.e. read, answer questions, do workbooks or worksheets);
3. Large group instruction as prevalent as the traditional three or more small group teaching;
4. High incidence of homogeneous grouping by grade, with subsequent large group teaching; and
5. Heavy use of round-robin reading.

Implicit (and sometimes explicit) in these descriptions of heavy basal and large group oriented classroom reading instruction are some assumptions concerning the dearth of several highly recommended practices. Preservice teachers saw

1. Few comprehension strategies being taught;
2. Writing experiences not an integral part of the reading program: and
3. Little opportunity for independent reading or reading for enjoyment.

In sum, student responses in this study seem to verify poor classroom practices that reading researchers have documented in observational studies cited earlier in the paper. In addition, the students' perceptions underscore a critical dilemma faced by reading educators: in many EFEs, students feel they are <u>not observing</u> what scholars in reading education are recommending as appropriate practices and what many instructors in university classrooms are <u>teaching</u>. The total situation is one of situational irony. This literary term is used to imply a discrepancy between what is expected and what happens. As this study suggests, this term can be aptly applied to preservice reading methods courses and early

field experiences at the university level. The irony and the dilemma are that what we teach students and anticipate they experience (and use) often never actually happens in real life.

Facilitating Program-to-Field Consistency

How can educators address this theory/practice gulf? The most expedient and immediate way is through course content that acknowledges the conflict and prepares student to deal with it reflectively. The most effective and lasting way is through major institutional changes that facilitate program-to-field consistency. (For a more detailed explanation of each recommendation see Dowhower, 1988.)

University Educator Initiatives

In some ways individual faculty initiatives may be "band-aid" solutions; however, they allow the reading educator to address the dilemma and frustrations immediately--before, during and after field experiences. Below are four strategies the author has found effective:

Explore Teacher Constraints. Discuss with students the constraints under which elementary teachers operate. Help them to understand the reasons why it is so difficult for teachers to follow their beliefs about good teaching. The works of Shavelson & Stern (1981); Simpson, Ratekin, & Alvermann (1986); Duffy & Roehler (1986); and Shannon (1987) speak strongly to teacher constraint issues and are excellent to incorporate into reading course content.

Prepare Students for the Dilemmas. When methods students are aware of the contradictions and the gulf between what they learn in college and what they see in the field, it is much easier for them to deal with the incongruity. Encourage students to perceive EFEs as chances to develop and practice the pedagogy taught to them on campus and to look for examples of good practices. Structure the field practicum to prepare students for the dilemma, and at the same time to facilitate a more even quality experience for each student. Make field assignments that

encourage observation of the match or mismatch of theory and practice. Encourage students to test out recommended practices against the realities of the classroom.

Give Alternatives to Inappropriate Reading Practices. Prepare students by giving alternatives to inappropriate practices. Show students how to fit theory to the real demands of the classroom. As Goodman (1986) argues, "help students learn strategies for creating freedom within the constraints..." (p. 121). Suggest alternatives for round-robin oral reading, creative uses of basal readers, and viable substitutes for workbook and worksheets.

Provide Models within the Methods Course. Use videotapes and direct instructor modeling as ways of facilitating reflective and inquiry-oriented modes of thinking and providing examples of "good" models. Live modeling in the university class is particularly powerful in that the technique allows the novice to learn the teacher's intentions, goals, and rationales for activity selection and sequence. Microteaching provides an additional opportunity for learning. Students observe model teaching, then have a chance to practice the behaviors in a less complex environment than in the field

Institutional Initiatives

While individual educators can make some difference, the best way to gain consistency in campus and field is by making major changes at the university level. These changes need to involve development of an inquiry-oriented curriculum, the selection and training of cooperating teachers, and the forging of closer communication between campus and field.

Inquiry-Oriented Curriculum. Zeichner (1981) argues that the goal of field-based experiences should be the development of reflective teachers and that an inquiry oriented curriculum will foster a critical orientation toward both teaching and the context surrounding it (Zeichner & Teitelbaum, 1982). Without this program thrust at the university level, the dilemma of the educator/practitioner gap cannot be solved, because the commonly used apprenticeship model may do little more than perpetuate established patterns of teaching (Zeichner, 1981) and actually inhibit the range of teaching practices and creative and intellectual involvement in the curriculum (Goodman, 1985).

Quality Placement. Secondly, the issue of quality placement has too long been neglected in EFEs. There is increasing documentation of the importance of careful selection of cooperating teachers for EFEs (Blair, 1978; Evans, 1986). However, most institutions provide orientation but little or no training for cooperating teachers in pre-student teaching experiences (Heath & Cyphert, 1985; Kay & Ishler, 1980). The selection and training of teachers should be as important in EFEs as in student teaching.

Campus-Field Communication and Program Reforms. Another solution to the campus-field dilemma is increased communication between cooperating teacher, college supervisor, and methods instructor. Often the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor are unaware of the content and goals of each methods course. McMillan (1987) found that supervisors' comments to students in EFE were content- and context-free, and rarely addressed the notion of "good" reading practices.

Below are four innovative projects that have potential for increasing communication between educators and practitioners:

(1) a computer data bank of important content and goals of each methods course, available to students, cooperating teachers and supervisors (see MacCims Project, Perry, 1988);

(2) an immersion-type EFE in which reading courses are taught in the practicum school with the help of the school staff (see Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1987);

(3) "in house" teaching experience where classes of students are brought to the university for small group instruction (see Wellington, 1986); and

(4) a cadre of clinical classrooms established in the public schools to facilitate observation, participation, and research (see Cohen, Arends & Murphy, 1987; and Allen, 1990)

Conclusion

Implicit in the discussion of solutions to the campus/field dilemma is the issue of inservice training or re-training of reading teachers. Both Blair (1978) and Hodges (1982) conclude from their research that instruction in teaching of reading should be a continual process extending from early field experiences through student teaching and on into inservice teaching. As Joyce & Clift (1984) suggest, it is important for novice teachers to witness their own education along with the continuing re-education of the personnel training them.

When this happens--when college reading educators can train preservice students in an atmosphere of ongoing learning and inquiry--novice teachers will more readily explore teacher constraints, test recommended practices against the realities of the classroom, attack the mismatch between theory and practice, and observe and establish a repertoire of good teaching practices. In addition, the university can

better implement an inquiry-oriented curriculum, assign quality placements and obtain closer union of schools and university - what Goodlad (1988) calls a symbiotic partnership, where "schooling and teacher education improve simultaneously"(p. 109).

Whatever the solutions to the campus-field dissonance, reading educators cannot provide quality training for preservice teachers until that dissonance and situational irony are resolved. Two students in this study put the problem very simply. One wrote, "I think there are so many neat ways that we know to teach reading now. It is a shame that not more of those strategies are being used." The other, "In my methods class, I learned so many different ways to teach reading. The sad thing was that I saw very little of them in the field."

Notes

[1] For purpose of clarification, the term early field experience student refers to an elementary education university undergraduate who is fulfilling practicum requirements in a public or private school classroom prior to student teaching; pupil refers to an elementary school child being taught; and instructor refers to university and reading educator faculty. Student teachers refer to university elementary education undergraduate students who have completed all early field experiences and are enrolled in a semester of classroom teaching under supervision of a cooperating teacher and college supervisor.

[2] No cooperating teacher had more than one EFE student in the three semesters of data gathering.

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Table 1: Overall Evaluation of the Reading Instruction in a Two-Week Early Field Experience by 155 Preservice Teachers

Ratings of Reading Instruction	# of Preservice Teachers	Percentage
Positive	28	18.1
Negative	84	54.2
Positive/Negative	43	27.7

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